

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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OPR-02 DHA-02 PC-05 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS BRASILIA 4592

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: POLICE ARREST 800 STUDENTS IN BELO HORIZONTE; UNIVERSITY OF
BRASILIA RECESSED FOR ENTIRE PERIOD OF CARTER VISIT

REF: (A) BRASILIA 4567 (B) BRASILIA 4523

1. SUMMARY: POLICE ARRESTED OVER 800 STUDENTS SATURDAY WHO
WERE ATTEMPTING TO HOLD A PROHIBITED NATIONAL STUDENT'S
MEETING IN BELO HORIZONTE. NEWSPAPER REPORTS MENTIONED
ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF TEAR-GASSING AND CLUBBING OF
STUDENTS BY POLICE BUT SAID THAT THERE WERE NO MAJOR CONFLICTS.
IN BRASILIA, THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY (UNB) DECLARED
THAT THE SCHOOL WOULD BE RECESSED FROM MONDAY JUNE 6 TO
WEDNESDAY JUNE 8. STUDENT LEADERS DECLARED THEIR INTENTION
TO CONTINUE THEIR STRIKE, BUT BY MONDAY MORNING THE UNIVERSITY
CAMPUS HAD BEEN CORDONED OFF AND OCCUPIED BY SECURITY FORCES.
END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY POLICE ARRESTED OVER 800 STUDENTS ATTEMPTING
TO HOLD A PROHIBITED NATIONAL STUDENTS MEETING IN BELO
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HORIZONTE ON SATURDAY JUNE 4. THE STUDENTS, REPRESENTATIVES
OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT DIRECTORATES FROM UNIVERSITIES
THROUGHOUT BRAZIL, HAD PLANNED TO USE THE MEETING TO
RE-ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL STUDENT UNION, OUTLAWED OVER 10 YEARS
AGO BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE
MEETING, THE POLICE SURROUNDED AND EVENTUALLY OCCUPIED
THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF MINAS GERAIS (UFMG) AND SET UP

CHECKPOINTS ON ALL MAJOR ROADS LEADING INTO BELO HORIZONTE. APPROXIMATELY 350 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED WHILE HOLDING A VIGIL IN THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF THE UFMG, THE REST OF THE ARRESTED STUDENTS WERE EITHER DETAINED AT THE CHECKPOINTS OR PICKED UP IN THE ENVIROUS OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. MAJOR CLASHES WERE AVOIDED, BUT POLICE DID USE TEAR GAS AND DOGS TO BREAK UP A SMALL STREET DEMONSTRATION OF ABOUT 70 PERSONS AND THE ARRESTED STUDENTS WERE REPORTEDLY BEING ROUGHED UP. REPORTEDLY, SOME 50 STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS ORGANIZERS OF THE BELO MEETING WILL BE BROUGHT TO TRIA.

3. THE RECTOR OF THE UFMG, WHO HAD RECESSED THE UNIVERSITY SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER IN THE HOPE OF PREVENTING THE STUDENT MEETING, PROTESTED THE PRESENCE OF MILITARY POLICE ON CAMPUS AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD RESIGN HIS POSITION. STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITIES IN SAO PAULO, RIO GRANDE DO SUL, RIO DE JANEIRO AND BAHIA STATED THEY WOULD TAKE ACTIONS TO PROTEST THE ARRESTES IN BELO HORIZONTE, AND THERE WERE UNCONFIRMED RUMORS OF A NATIONAL STUDENT STRIKE. SPEAKING FOR THE GOGERNMENT, FEDERAL DEPUTY FRANCELINO PEREIRA, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF ARENA, SAID THAT "THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE PRESENT STUDENT MOVEMENT INTOLERABLE AND WILL NOT CONSIDER ANY DIALOGUE (WITH STUDENTS)."

4. IN BRASILIA, THE RECTOR OF THE UNB RECESSED THE UNIVERSITY FOR THREE DAYS, FROM JUNE 6 TO JUNE 8 IN ORDER TO DIFFUSE THE STUDENT STRIKE IN PROGRESS (REF A). STUDENT LEADERS DELARED THAT THEY
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WOULD CONTINUE WITH THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND ASSEMBLIES THEY HAVE BEEN HOLDING FOR THE PAST WEEK DESPITE THE RECESS. ON MONDAY MORNING, HOWEVER, POLICE HAD AGAIN SURREOUNDED THE CAMPUS AND WERE CHECKING THE IDENTITY PAPERS OF ALL PERSONS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE UNIVERSITY.

5. OVER 600 PROFESSORS, JOURNALISTS, POLITICAL FIGURES AND INTELLECTUALS FROM RIO GRANDE DO SUL PUBLISHED A MANIFESTO SATURDAY IN SUPPORT OF PREVIOUS MANIFESTOES ISSUED BY SIMILAR GROUPS IN RIO DE JANEIRO AND SAO PAULO (REF B). THE RIO GRANDE DO SUL STATEMENT ECHOED THE OTHER TWO GROUPS' CALL FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND RECOGNIZED THAT "THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY CONSISTS OF THE FREE EXERCISE OF CRITICISM."
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